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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001302

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN, G/TIP, AND DRL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [RF](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: UZBEK-RUSSIAN LABOR MIGRATION AGREEMENTS: DETAILS
NOT INCLUDED

REF: TASHKENT 438 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA Brad Hanson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Russia and Uzbekistan signed three bilateral labor migration agreements during the July 3-4 visit to Tashkent of Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov. Russian Ambassador Farit Mukhametshin told the Charge July 12 that the agreements are meant primarily to legalize the status of Uzbeks working in Russia. The agreements protect the rights of the migrant labor force, while allowing the Russian government to resolve taxation, social, and legal issues associated with Uzbeks migrant labor. Mukhametshin said that agreements envision a way for Uzbek migrants currently in Russia illegally to legalize their status, which probably would involve a process through the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labor, and creates a standard process for "repatriating" (i.e., deporting) future illegal aliens from Russia. The Russian Ambassador said, however, that the agreements provide a framework only and that most of the details, including implementing legislation and regulations, remain to be worked out.

¶2. (C) Mukhametshin estimated that approximately one million Uzbeks work in Russian each year, sending about \$1.5 billion back to Uzbekistan. He said that the number of Uzbeks wishing to work in Russia seems to be increasing. The Russian Embassy's Consular Section sees about 200 people a day, although a very small number of these people end up going to Russia legally. Mukhametshin admitted the Russian economy needs laborers, but said that relatively few Uzbeks have the qualifications necessary to do anything but unskilled labor. Russian press reports indicate that Uzbekistan the third largest supplier of foreign labor to Russia, after Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

¶3. (C) The Russian Ambassador was quick to point out that the agreements also will benefit Russian businesses in Uzbekistan, particularly Lukoil and Gazprom, which tend to bring experts from Russia to fill key positions. He estimated these two companies alone need 1500 skilled Russians to work in Uzbekistan.

¶4. (C) Comment: There is little doubt that the impetus behind the agreements is the need to regulate, or control, the number of Uzbeks working in Russia. These agreements should be a step forward, as they will convey some sort of official status to the large number of Uzbek labor migrants in Russia, and, if appropriate implementation mechanisms are worked out and adhered to, should help to reduce abuses, reining in unscrupulous migrant labor contractors, and thus helping

alleviate the trafficking-in-persons problem in both Russia
and Uzbekistan.
HANSON